



## TESTIMONY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN-FLINT

Presented by  
Chancellor Ruth J. Person

Before the  
Michigan State Senate  
Senate Economic Development Committee

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Thank you for the opportunity to address the committee this afternoon on behalf of the University of Michigan-Flint. My name is Ruth Person and I have been the chancellor of UM-Flint since 2008.

It has been another exciting year for the university. Our undergraduate and graduate enrollment once again experienced growth, reaching an enrollment of nearly 8,600 students. While our formal tenth day count is not released until the middle of next week, it's another year of exciting growth on our campus as we once again welcome an incoming freshman class of over 700 students.

The university is helping to assist the transition of the Flint/Genesee County region from a manufacturing-based economy to a knowledge-based economy. In the aggregate, we have nearly 34,000 students enrolled in a post-secondary institutions of higher education in Genesee County. Our university continues to be one of the most affordable public universities in Michigan.

I have included in the folder some slides that I will be referring to this morning that talk about the impact our campus has on the City of Flint and Genesee County.

### Enrollment (Slide 2)

In the fall of 2002, we had a little over 6,400 students—557 graduate students and 5,877 undergraduate students. Fast forward to Fall 2012, we were at almost 8,300 students strong, having more than doubled the number of graduate students in a 10-year period and significantly increasing the number of undergraduate students.

In Fall 2012, 39.3% of undergraduate students are at least 25 years of age.

The average age of our undergraduate students in Fall 2011 is 26 years of age while over 5% of our incoming freshmen were age 22 or older.

### Retention (Slide 3)

We are also achieving higher student retention rates. In a 10-year period, our retention rate has increased by 5%. Students who enroll as first-year students are having success, and staying to continue their studies. That is certainly contributing to our strong enrollment growth. With the addition of student housing during this 10 years, more students are coming from farther distances, living on or near campus as they pursue their degrees. Last year, we made the decision to keep First Street open year-round to better meet the needs of students in foster care, international residents, and other residents. The fact that we are attracting students from a broader geographical area shows the academic reputation of our institution is spreading well beyond the borders of Genesee County.

### International Student Enrollment (Slide 4)

These numbers alone only scratch the surface of our enrollment growth during a 10-year period. Our student body is more diverse than ever. If we look at the steady and consistent growth of our international student population, it shows that the University of Michigan-Flint is becoming a

global destination for education. Jumping from 33 students to 348 students in 10 years is outstanding.

This past academic year, we have nearly 249 identified student veterans who have enrolled at the University of Michigan-Flint who bring a wealth of diversity, talent, and needs. Because of our efforts over the past several years with educating and assisting our student veterans, this year alone, 83% of our student veterans are accessing their federal educational benefits.

This summer, the Regents of the University of Michigan approved a change that will allow students who are or who have served in the United States military to be eligible for in-state tuition rates. The change goes into effect starting January 2014.

#### University Physical Expansion (Slide 5)

With a growing number of people on campus, we have expanded our physical footprint in downtown Flint over the years. In 2002, we opened the William S. White Building, and then later added the International Center, built the First Street Residence Hall, created the Student Veterans Resource Center, and then moved the School of Management to the Riverfront Center.

In the coming year, with your support of our Capitol Outlay request, we will begin to enhance our Murchie Science Building to meet the needs of STEM related academic programming.

#### Civic Engagement Courses and Enrollment (Slide 6)

Our university-wide commitment to civic engagement has also grown over the last 10 years. As this graphic shows, we have doubled the number of civic engagement courses and sections, and our total enrollment in those courses has doubled accordingly. Finally, on this slide, you'll see that all this has resulted in a substantial increase of the degrees we confer annually. During the past academic year, we conferred nearly 1,500 degrees.

### Academic Degree Programs (Slide 7)

The conferring of degrees is a significant measure of our success. Due to our strong enrollment growth over the last several years, we have seen a rise in the number of students who are graduating. This is good news for our entire state because we want to have more people with college degrees in Michigan. The number of people earning their undergraduate and graduate degrees at UM-Flint has grown exponentially.

In fact, when measured against peer institutions, UM-Flint exceeds national graduation rate averages. For each of these statistics shown, there is a personal story. Every student who comes to the university comes with their own set of issues, needs, and aspirations. They have moved from that enrollment-graphic statistic to a degree-conferred statistic through a great deal of thoughtful interaction from our stellar faculty and staff, with the emphasis on *thoughtful*.

### Academic Degrees Conferred (Slide 8)

The reason we have grown in enrollment over the last several years is the individualized attention that we focus on our students. We are a first choice for students who want the experience of a premier urban university that offers opportunity for undergraduate research, service learning, and outstanding faculty. Over 80% of our graduates stay to live and work in the state of Michigan, with more than 60% remaining in and around Genesee County.

One way the university is doing this through creative partnerships with our K-12 school partners and community college partners. We have been “Enhancing the Pipeline” for several years.

One of the most significant strategic decisions that we have made is to fully partner with K-12 districts to help prepare students for their post secondary educations. Whether it is by reaching out early to middle school students through the Choosing to Succeed or Committed to Excellence programs offered by the Office of Educational Opportunity Initiatives, or by creating unique dual enrollment programs throughout the state, the University of Michigan-Flint is leading in preparing our young people for success in their academic futures.

### Dual Enrollment (Slide 9)

The school districts of Livingston County, Lapeer County, and Utica Community Schools are answering the call for preparing high school students for college by creating landmark dual enrollment programs with us. Qualified students can enroll in college-level courses, getting a head start on their post-secondary educations. The credits they earn are transferable to UM-Flint and to most other institutions of higher education. In 2012, we welcomed 206 high school students as dual enrollees; a 50% increase over the previous year.

### Genesee Early College (Slide 10)

The Genesee Early College continues to thrive. This iconic partnership with the Genesee Intermediate School District has been a resounding success and shows the power of creativity as it relates to preparing students for higher education. We now have had students not just graduate from Genesee Early College but from UM-Flint as well. Today the typical Genesee Early College student graduates at the end of year 13 (one year beyond normal high school completion) with a Michigan Merit high school diploma and 50 or more UM-Flint credits at no cost to their parents. About 60% of GEC graduates enroll following graduation at UM-Flint.

The commitment to offer dual enrollment opportunities to high school students within their own high schools is extraordinary. Progressive school districts are recognizing that in order to meet their best and brightest students where they're at, they have to move to a higher level of curriculum in order to prepare them. Our effort to physically locate within these school districts is a sea change.

I invite you to visit our campus and meet with our Genesee Early College students and you will be impressed by their passion, commitment, and willingness to forgo the typical high school experience to gain a competitive advantage over their peers.

I am pleased to share that we have two new initiatives with the Beecher Community Schools and the Mt. Morris Schools that are underway.

The Neff Center for Place-Based Education is our latest initiative. Located in the northwest wing of the Beecher Community School District's combined middle-high school, the purpose of the center is to mutually enrich university and northern Flint communities through place-based education, research, and student services. Operated under the auspices of Provost's Office and University Outreach, the facility will accommodate engaged teaching and research projects, while also offering space for an increasing number of university programs involving students, citizens, and organizations.

Our School of Education and Human Services will work with the faculty at the Pinehurst Elementary Early Childhood program within the Mt. Morris School district to incorporate literacy programs using the newest technology and teaching methods available. Our student teachers will be working side by side with their faculty in K-1 classrooms throughout the winter and spring semesters to aid in the educational processes of these early learners.

#### Community College Partnerships (Slide 12)

We have wonderful relationships and articulation agreements in place with our colleagues in ten of the State's community colleges and are working on additional articulation agreements with several others that have expressed an interest in working with our university. Last summer, the University of Michigan-Flint partnered with Alpena Community College and began offering the RN to BSN degree on their campus. It's a mixed mode program of study and our faculty/staff travel to their campus on a regular basis.

We offer academic programs at:

- Alpena Community College: RN to BSN

- Lansing Community College: RN to BSN

- St. Clair County Community College: Psychology and RN/BSN

- Wayne County Community College: RN/BSN and Business Administration

During the last academic year alone, we awarded 208 scholarships to over 1,092 students valued at nearly \$3 million. The university has been

consistent over the years in increasing institutional aid at either the same or greater percentage of that year's tuition rate increase.

#### Economic Impact (Slide 13)

Finally, I would like to highlight the financial economic impact of the University of Michigan-Flint. I have included a spreadsheet of the data from the past three financial years, which reports our Payroll, Purchases, and Funds Released to Students.

In our current Fiscal Year 2013, our total economic impact is over \$112 million dollars to the local economy. As one of the larger employers in the City of Flint with over 1,000 employees, our university makes a demonstrated impact.

Thank you for your time and consideration this morning. I would be pleased to answer any questions that the committee may have.